

2

BIBLE ELECTION

EXPLAINED,

IN A SERMON ON ROMANS, XI. 5.

BY THE
REV. EDWARD SMITH.

Neglect the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me that ye might have life.—John v. 39—40.



HAGERSTOWN, MD.

J. MAXWELL, PRINTER.

1830

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTEN LENOX TILDEN FOUNDATION

IN A MEMORIAL TO THE

NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTEN LENOX TILDEN FOUNDATION

NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTEN LENOX TILDEN FOUNDATION

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
ASTEN LENOX TILDEN FOUNDATION
NEW YORK

NEW YORK

NEW YORK

NEW YORK

NEW YORK

BIBLE ELECTION

EXPLAINED, &c.

“Even so then, at this present time also, there is a remnant according to the election of grace”—Romans xi, 5.

THAT God has ever had in the world, a peculiar people, is a truth too obvious to be denied by any that have paid attention to the divine economy. After Abel, the righteous seed was slain by that wicked one Cain, Seth was raised up as the peculiar favorite of Heaven, and blessed with privileges which were denied Cain and his posterity. This peculiarity was manifested to the descendants of Seth, until their intermarriages with the posterity of Cain produced that great wickedness, which brought on the flood and terminated the antediluvian age.

Seth died, A. M. 1042. In this year Lamech was 168 years old ; it being 55 years after Enoch's translation. Lamech was cotemporary with Shem 93 years ; and Shem was cotemporary with Abraham 150, and Isaac 50 years. Thus the knowledge of the true God, and the nature of his worship, were revealed to, and preserved among the patriarchs until the covenant of promise was made with Abraham : Gen. 17 ch. With Isaac, the heir of the promise, the Lord confirmed the Covenant, and with the Jewish nation continued his peculiar blessings, until the time in which our text was written. That God chose those illustrious characters and their descendants, together with the Jewish nation, and blessed them with favours which he withheld from the rest of mankind, cannot be denied without rejecting the clearest evidence. Seeing then that the doctrine of election or peculiarity is a doctrine of revelation ; and as this doctrine has been variously understood, and differently set forth by divines, we shall proceed to consider this intricate and highly important subject by shewing, 1st. That the doctrine of unconditional election, and reprobation is true ; being clearly taught in the Scriptures. 2. That election to eternal life is conditional in the case of every man. 3. Shew in what sense the doctrine of unconditional election and reprobation is true ; by proving that those Scriptures which speak of unconditional election, have no relation to eternal glory, but to time privileges, which may be so abused as to incur the divine displeasure, and bring down eternal destruction on those blessed with them. And that those which speak of unconditional reprobation have no reference to eternal death, and that the reprobate may come at last unto life eternal.

I. The doctrine of unconditional election and reprobation is what we propose to prove first. This will appear irrefragable from the following Scriptures : “And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood, in old time, *even* Terah the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor : and they serve other Gods. And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac”—Josh. 24, 2, 3. We can see nothing in Abraham to recommend him to God, that we do not see in Nachor—They were both Idolators ; yet the Lord chose Abraham, and passed by or rejected Nachor. Abraham’s faithfulness was not the cause or condition of his being chosen, for he was chosen before he was faithful. The same prerogative is used in the choice of Jacob and the rejection of Esau—“For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth ; It was said unto her” [Rebecca] “the elder shall serve the younger. As it is written Jacob have I loved ; but Esau have I hated.” Rom. ix, 11, 13. This text puts the point under consideration, beyond successful contradiction ; for as the children were not yet born, they could not have done any thing to induce the Almighty to choose the one, and reject the other—to love the one, and to hate the other. And lest these facts should not be conclusive it is declared, that the design of God was to manifest his electing purpose, and not to reward works.

It is farther proven by the choice, or election of the Jewish nation ; for they were chosen before they were a nation, even at the time the Covenant was made with Abraham—Gen. 17 and 7. “I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.” Nor was all the posterity of Abraham chosen ; but first Isaac, then Jacob and his children — while Ishmael the son of Hagar, and Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Median, Ishbak, and Shuah, sons which Keturah bore to Abraham after the death of Sarah, and Esau were rejected. By the choice of the Jewish nation, the descendants of Jacob were blessed with the privileges of revealed religion, by birth. (see Rom. iii, 1) while the other descendants of Abraham, and the rest of the world were denied them for the space of 1500 years. Neither were they chosen on account of any foreseen faithfulness in them ; for if the life of Esau be compared with that of Jacob, it will not suffer by the comparison ; indeed we may say, and say justly too, that Esau’s virtues are far more conspicuous than Jacob’s. While subtlety and intrigue are distinguishing traits in the character of Jacob, a magnanimous ingenuousness adorns that of

Esau's—in the case of his brother he nobly forgives. And we find that the Jews, in every period of their history, were a rebellious and stiffnecked people, in consequence of which they were visited with hot displeasure and finally overthrown. See Deut. ix, 4, 6, and Rom. xi, 20.

It cannot be argued that Abraham's faithfulness, was the cause of Jacob and his posterity being chosen : For had the blessing been inherited by birth, the elder and not the younger would have been the heir, according to the patriarchal laws ; or had it been a common inheritance, all his descendants would have been equal heirs—And in either case, Jacob & his children would have been deprived of the blessings of the holy covenant. We might advert to the case of Samuel and of Paul, the parable of the talents, and others to prove the doctrine contended for under this head ; but we think what has been said sufficient to establish it beyond successful contradiction—as these texts cannot be construed, or even tortured into any other meaning. And here we will lay down a rule which has governed us in our researches after truth, & which may justly be termed a theological axiom. Any doctrine, which is clearly expressed by a number of plain texts of Scripture, taken in connexion with their contexts, and which cannot be fairly construed into any other design, is a doctrine of revelation, and therefore must be true—That this rule applies to the foregoing proposition and argument is evident, we think, to every reflecting mind.—We proceed to shew—

2. That election to eternal life is conditional in the case of every man.

The doctrine of unconditional election to eternal life, is inseparably connected with the doctrine of unconditional reprobation to eternal death ; they stand or fall together. Some of the Calvinists have denied this consequence, but others who are far more consistent, affirm with *Calvin*, that they stand or fall together. The Calvinists try to maintain the connexion between second causes and effects ; and to establish the doctrine of second causes ; and I have no doubt that many have been bewildered in this labyrinth, and lost the way of truth. But in no sense can man, or any other being, be said to be the cause of a thing which they are necessitated to do. The power which acts, if it be free from necessity, is the cause of the action performed ; if not, it is nothing more than the instrument by which some prior cause operates ; and that operator who acts prior to, and free from any kind of necessity, is the cause of the action, and all other operators, (for agents they are not in any sense,) are nothing but instruments, and are no more accountable for their actions than a fond mother would be, were she taken by a monster and dashed with such violence on her sleeping babe as to destroy its life. A jury could not be found, who, acting

according to their convictions of right, would convict her of murder.

This is precisely the kind of agency, which the Calvinist calls the agency of second causes ; their words are, "God from all eternity did by the most wise, and holy council of his own will, freely and unchangably ordain whatsoever comes to pass ; yet so as thereby neither is God the author of sin ; nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established." *Con. of Faith*, page 15.—They represent these unchangable decrees as operating through the agency of second causes, but these second causes are nothing but mere instruments, because they are compelled to act in certain ways, and therefore can have no agency. This will clearly appear, if we give the subject a farther consideration. They say, *Con. of Faith*, p. 16. "Although God knows whatever may or can come to pass, upon all supposed conditions ; yet hath he not decreed any thing because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions." From this declaration we see, that God in his decrees has no view to what man may or can do ; but determines that certain things shall be done independently of any foreseen condition arising out of *human agency*. And on p. 17, it is said : "Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid,"—"hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory," "without any foresight of faith or good works, or any other thing in the creature as conditions or causes moving him thereunto." Here it is roundly asserted, that the elect are chosen unto eternal glory, regardless not only of conditions, but of any cause arising out of human agency. And farther, that those men and angels thus chosen are unchangably designed, and their number so certain and definite, that it can neither be increased nor diminished—p. 17. Thus we see that a certain number are to be saved, independently of what any man, or all men may or can do — consequently, what they call second causes are nothing more than the instruments by which the Almighty accomplishes his works ; and what they call the contingency of second causes, must be the Lord, determined that certain things should be done, without determining by what instrument they should be accomplished ; but the things were determined and made certain, and it is a matter of no consequence by what instrument they are effected. From this view of the subject, the doctrine of unconditional reprobation to eternal death must follow as an inevitable consequence. For, although they do not fix the time in which these decrees of reprobation were passed ; yet they set forth the cause of the reprobates destruction, viz: *sin*: "God was pleased" "to pass by, and ordain them [the reprobates] to dishonor & wrath for their sins," p. 19. If God, from all eternity unchangably ordained whatsoever comes to pass—Sin

comes to pass ; therefore God unchangably ordained sin—And sin, which they make the cause of the reprobates destruction ; but which in reality, according to their doctrine, is only the instrument by which it is effected, is made unchangably certain, and consequently the damnation of the reprobate as certain. This will also appear from the number of the elect being so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished. For if God determined that just so many should be saved and no more, he must have determined that the rest should be damned, and not one of those doomed to wrath and death eternal, can do any thing by which to escape. And though it may be argued that they are not compelled to sin, which cannot be done successfully unless man can change the unalterable decrees of God ; yet their damnation is made certain because the number of the elect cannot be either increased or diminished ; and if their destruction is unalterably certain, it is a matter of entire indifference whether they sin or not—damned they must be, and there is no help.

That we are not mistaken as to the doctrine of the Calvinists will further appear, from the Scriptures which they bring to support the doctrine of election to eternal glory and reprobation to eternal death. It will only be necessary to notice one text. “For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth.” “As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.” The love and hatred here spoken of, existed before the children were yet born, and could not be the result of good or evil done by them ; and as this passage is brought expressly to prove eternal election and reprobation, we must understand them to mean that God loved Jacob with an everlasting love, and hated Esau with an everlasting hatred, regardless of any thing done by them, for they were not yet born. We are thus driven to the conclusion that the doctrine of the Presbyterians, and all those other Sects which subscribe to the Westminster Confession of Faith, is, that a certain number called the elect will be saved, do what they may ; and that all the rest called the reprobates, will be damned, do what they can. This conclusion we think unavoidable from the premises, which we have endeavored to examine carefully, and free from prejudice—notwithstanding it has been said again & again, that it is unfair, it is caricature, &c.*

This doctrine we conceive to be not only opposed to mercy, but also irreconcilable to justice. We conceive that the plain common

*The author of this discourse, has read carefully, Calvin's Institutes through, that he might understand the doctrine of Calvinism, and after reading them, he is more convinced than he was before, that this is a fair representation. He would not for any consideration, knowingly misrepresent any denomination of Christians.

sense meaning of justice is, rendering an equivalent for injuries done or benefits received. But we ask what do the poor reprobates suffer in everlasting death, and what have they done, or what can they do to merit such pain? The answer to the first enquiry is : "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God"—Ps. ix, 17. This hell is called the bottomless pit—Rev. ix, 1, & xx, 1—A lake of fire—Rev. xx, 14, 15. In this dreadful hell the Saviour says : "Their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."—Mark ix, 48; and all this is to be eternal according to Christ's own words, Mat. xxv, 46. The wicked in the morning of the resurrection shall be raised up with unwasting bodily sensibilities to be cast into the lake of fire, where their worm that dieth not, like a rapacious vulture, shall devour all their mental enjoyments, and make their inward horror a match for their outward burnings—over them despair will hover, and by the flapping of her raven wings, foretel to them an endless eternity of woe!

Fancy to yourselves that you are standing beside a pit that has no bottom, and that the laws of gravitation continue in the same direction unchangably, and begin to drop balls into it, and continue dropping them, at the rate of one every minute for six thousand years, then calculate the distance travelled by the first, and then the second, and so on unto the last, and add their distances together—then drop in another, and the period will come in no very distant point of eternity, when the last ball will have penetrated farther into the abyss, than the aggregate of all the rest. Viewing the case of the wicked in the light of this supposed illustration, and estimating their quantum of misery by their moral distance from God, which is certainly the correct way ; we see them cast into the bottomless pit, (they as the balls) must continue to progress in their journeying from God, and as they progress, their misery must become more and more intense ; and the point will come in eternity, when the last soul that may enter the abodes of sorrow, shall have penetrated further into those regions of darkness, than all the damned together had previous to its entrance, and its misery exceed the aggregate of theirs up to the time it entered.

This doctrine is farther supported by the fact, that all intelligent creatures are related to the Deity by the laws of original obligation, which require that the powers created, be constantly and perfectly employed in obedience to the Creator ; or the privileges of the Covenant of Grace, which accepts of obedience through the Redeemer, though man be an imperfect creature. At the Day of Judgment the Saviour will give up the kingdom of his mediation, to reign in his everlasting kingdom forever,— then the broad requirements of original obligation will fall upon man, and tho' he sink to hell they will rest upon him even there. His inability to obey cannot exonerate him, seeing that it arises from his wilfully per-

ersisting in crime, and refusing pardon and regeneration, when they were freely offered him through the Saviour's blood. And even in the lake of woe, the obligations of obedience will be upon him; because he is still a creature of God, and as such is bound to render him perfect obedience. But all power to obey having been wasted in the rebellious course of sin, which brought him into that dreadful place; the requirements of his Creator must remain uncomplished with, and consequently his guilt must increase forever, and his punishment continue to augment for ever and ever. O how much will it weigh in never ending duration! Wretched, wretched picture, whose brightest side is everlasting banishment from God and the glory of his power!

Should any object that the bottomless pit is not the place where the wicked are to spend eternity; it is only the place in which the Old Serpent, and the souls of the damned, are kept under chains of darkness unto the *Judgment of the Great Day*; and that then, with Death and Hell, they should be cast into a lake of fire. If we admit this objection, it only tends to heighten the picture, as the place in which capital offenders are confined, awaiting their final trial, is less dreadful than the execution of the punishment due to their crimes; and that the wicked are capital offenders in the superlative degree is evident from the fact, their punishment will be eternal. Having given a faint representation of what the reprobates must suffer, we come to the second enquiry—What have the reprobates done, or what can they do, to merit this fearful, this indelible torment? The answer, on Calvinistic principles is very easy and direct. Their damnation was made unalterably certain from before the foundation of the world, and they could no more help or prevent it than they could their being; as we have shewn in the foregoing part of our discourse. If this be true, and it is most certainly, if Calvinism be true, the damnation of the reprobate does not arise from any thing he does or can do, which he might leave undone, and therefore he is not the cause of his destruction in any sense; but on the sovereign will of God alone, it depends, and man is no more to blame for his destruction than he is for his existence. The specious pretext that the reprobates are punished for their sins, is like drenching a man with ardent spirits, and then burning him to death for being drunk. We think it absolutely impossible to reconcile this doctrine with the common attributes of humanity, much less the justice of an infinitely holy and perfect God, which, in its association with the rest of the divine perfections, receives from their commingled effulgence the mild and softening charms of glory. We need say nothing respecting its hostility to mercy, which ever seeks to bind up the broken heart—to dry up the tears of the mourner.

But it has been argued that all men are sinners by nature, and

that it would be just in the Almighty to damn all; and if it be just to damn all it cannot be unjust to damn some. To this we answer, that although all men have become depraved and sinful, through the transgression of Adam, yet it would be the height of injustice to damn them for that depravity. For as they never had it in their power to prevent it, they cannot be in fault for having it! And was there no way provided to save man from this unavoidable depravity, we hesitate not to say that justice, enabled by prescience to see the fate of man, would have prevented the existence of the human family. To punish man for his unavoidable depravity is precisely like hanging a man for being born blind. But it has been further argued, that we all sinned in Adam, and therefore are all guilty before God. We reply, we did not sin actively or consciously, and it would be injustice to punish them actively who sinned inactively—consciously, who sinned unconsciously; admitting that such sin could exist. But to come to the point, and uncap the ARCANUM at once; if God from all eternity unchangably foreordained whatsoever comes to pass—Adam's sin came to pass; therefore, it was unchangably ordained, and he could no more prevent it than he could his existence.

Would it be just to damn Adam, eternally, for his sin, seeing he could not prevent it; much less millions of his posterity who had no part in, nor control over it. Upon this rock, the great, the good, Mr. Whitefield foundered, by taking on board a Calvinistic pilot, the Rev. Jonathan Edwards; and not being able to extricate himself, his matchless energies were paralyzed by the anodyne of Calvinism.

But to put this point beyond the lingering of a doubt, we propose to shew that the original threatening, "in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," had no reference to Adam's posterity, nor were they included in the threatened punishment. The time of the execution of this threatening was the very day of the transgression; and the punishment was death. This threatening was staid by the undertaking of the Saviour to die for man! and when he fulfilled his undertaking, he did it by dying on the Cross—he shed his blood—and to it we look for salvation from the curse of a broken law—he died a temporal death; an inevitable proof that temporal death was implied in the threatening; and if so, Adam would have died temporally, as well as spiritually, the very day he sinned, had not Christ interposed. The body would have fallen into the dust, and the soul into everlasting despair.—And as the union of the soul and body are indispensable to procreation; and as the body never could have had a resurrection if the Saviour had not undertaken for man; for he is the resurrection as well as the life, Adam could not have propagated his species either on earth or in hell, and there would have been an end to the

Human race. Justice would have been satisfied in the eternal destruction of Adam and Eve; this was all she required, and if she had been left to flow in her own natural channel, would have extended no farther. And if her demand would have been satisfied in their destruction, she never could have had any demand against their posterity—the punishment was confined to them who sinned, and to them only.

But the scheme which the Calvinists call the “doctrines of grace,” has a Saviour, who saved Adam from the penalty of the law, to propagate his species, and bring into existence millions, for whom this Saviour has made no provision through which they may be saved; for the transgression of Adam they must suffer forever. The original transgression in the hand of justice, stern justice, would have punished eternally but two, Adam and Eve, for sin committed in their proper selves; but in the hand of Calvinistic mercy it is made to destroy millions who had no agency in it, nor power to prevent it; and this is called by way of eminence, the doctrine of grace—grace a million times more severe than justice.

Having prepared the way by shewing that the doctrine of unconditional eternal reprobation, which is the inevitable consequence of unconditional eternal election, cannot be reconciled with the Divine perfections, we proceed to prove that every man has something to do in order to be saved in Heaven.

The Saviour said unto his disciples, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature; He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” Mark xvi. 15, 16. This is the burden of all the Apostles of Christ, and their successors were to preach unto the end of the world. And if the Saviour meant what he said, and to say he did not, would be to charge the God of truth with dissimulation, surely men are lost because they refuse to believe the record which God hath given of his Son. The same doctrine is taught in the following texts: “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.” John iii. 14, 15. And verse 18. “He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” In these texts it is plainly declared that eternal life is obtained through faith in the Son of God.

And that condemnation is the consequence of unbelief: In verse 16, it is said: “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” These texts prove clearly that men are to be saved through faith. And in John, v. 24, “Verily,

verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come unto condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." And vi. 35: "And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst:" verse 40. "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believe thou him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day:" verse 47. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life: chap. xi. 25, 26. "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die:" Acts x. 43. "To him gave all the Prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." In all these places it is clearly declared that man must believe in Jesus Christ in order to be saved; and that if he believe he shall be saved; but if he believeth not he shall be damned; and this is not only the doctrine of the Saviour, but all the Prophets gave witness to the same truth: It is at once the doctrine of the *Old and New Testament*.

No temporal salvation is here meant, for eternal salvation is clearly expressed. That eternal salvation can only be obtained through faith, will further appear, from the fact, that pardon and regeneration are obtained through it. See Rom. v. 1. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Here the justification which is followed by peace and joy, and which enables its possessor to rejoice in hope of the glory of God, is obtained through faith. And in Ephs. ii. 8, it is said: "For by grace are ye saved through faith." This salvation which is of grace through faith, is described in verse 10:—"Created in Christ Jesus unto good works." This text proves that regeneration is obtained through faith; and it is said, Heb. xi. 6: "Without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." This text authorizes us to conclude that if any are saved without faith they are not saved "according to the good pleasure of his will," and saved without coming to Christ, which is impossible. See John v. 40.

We might speak of Abraham's being justified by faith, and of many others who were saved by faith, but thinking that it would be unnecessary to add any thing more on this point, we proceed to shew how this doctrine of faith stands connected with the decisions of the day of judgment, and thereby sweep away the last hiding place of *finished salvation* from before the foundation of the world.

If it be objected that faith is not mentioned in connexion with

the decisions of the Day of Judgment, as forming any point on which they turn, and therefore cannot stand connected with eternal salvation as a condition: We answer, that although faith is not mentioned, yet works are; and those works too which flow from a living faith are rewarded with everlasting life: Viz. Feeding the hungry, and clothing the naked. See Matt. xxv. 34, 46.—These are the works which James brings to prove the existence or life of faith: James ii. 14, 26. If feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and doing other good works, acceptable to God, prove a man a true believer in Christ, and they evidently do, for without faith it is impossible to please God in any thing—"for whatsoever is not of faith is sin," Rom. xiv. 23; they will prove in the Day of Judgment, if they shall be found written in the Books, that he had been a believer on Christ in the world, and give him a right to claim the promise of eternal life, made to all who would believe on the only begotten *Son of God*. This is the light in which works will be viewed in the Day of Judgment; proving that man is saved by grace through faith.

But it may be argued that though faith is evidently required of all as the condition of salvation, yet faith is the gift of God, and none can have faith but those to whom he gives it; and if God should not please to give faith, none can be saved; and thus God saves sinners upon a condition which depends on the Creator, and not on the creature. This makes faith a part of salvation, and not the condition of it; for if there be any condition it must depend on man's agency. But as this argument is the only remaining prop on which the doctrine of unconditional election to eternal life leans, we shall proceed to a more careful examination of it. And to put this point to rest, we propose to prove, that the faith which is essential to, and effectual in, the salvation of the soul, cannot be the gift of God in every sense. There are two descriptions of faith spoken of in the Gospel, which we do not class with that which is made the condition of salvation! The faith which gives the cold assent of the mind to the truth of revealed religion, but does not move the heart to embrace the Saviour, which does not work by love, nor purify the heart. This kind of faith Simon had when he believed Philip's preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and was baptised on it; yet he remained in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity. See Acts, viii. 18, 24. It will hardly be contended by any that this description of faith is the gift of God. 2. That which enables its possessor to work miracles. This faith is spoken of, Acts iii. 16, where the miracle of restoring the lame man to perfect soundness, is recorded. Peter informed the astonished multitude, that through faith in the name of Jesus, the man was made whole. This faith is the gift of God in every sense. See I. Cor. xii. 9;

where those miraculous gifts which were given to but few, and not many of them to the same individual, are spoken of; and as faith is classed among them, and is said to be given to some individuals as their peculiar gift, we think it conclusive, that the faith to work miracles which was given to but few, even in those apostolic days, is there spoken of; and not the faith which is required of all men in order to be saved.

That this is not the faith which is required unto salvation, is farther evident, from the fact, that some have had it who were not truly the children of God. See Mat. vii. 22, 23. "Many will say to me in that day, [the Day of Judgment,] Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils?—and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them I never knew you." Here are some who cast out devils in the name of Jesus, consequently they must have believed in him; and yet the Saviour will profess unto them in the Day of Judgment, that he never knew them: A clear proof that salvation does not depend on this faith. That this kind of faith was given for the establishment and edification of the Church, and not for the salvation of those blessed with it, is clear from the preceding testimonies. Having shewn, we hope, to the satisfaction of all, that neither of these descriptions of faith stands essentially connected with our salvation, we proceed to that which does. The faith which is requisite to salvation, is defined: Heb. xi. 1. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." By this faith the Elders obtained a good report, and without it we cannot please God: See verses 2 and 6. In this definition two things are specified, the union of which constitute faith.

1. The substance of things hoped for. The word, (says Dr. A. Clark,) "which we translate substance, signifies subsistence—that which becomes a foundation for another thing to rest on." Mr. Wesley, and all the Commentators which I have examined, render it subsistence; and there can be no doubt of this being the true meaning. The things hoped for, of which faith is the subsistence or foundation, are the peace and approbation of God, and those blessings by which the soul is prepared for the kingdom of Heaven: in a word, the salvation of God perfected in the heart. And as the foundation is the beginning of every edifice, so faith which is the subsistence or foundation of salvation, must be the beginning of it. The many places in the word of God, where those blessed with salvation, are compared to temples and edifices, simplify and support this view: And that faith in its first degree, or part, is salvation begun in the heart, is clear, from the many express declarations of the Saviour, which go to prove that man can do nothing good without the influence of the Spirit; such

us, "Without me ye can do nothing." And if we cannot do any thing pleasing to God without Divine influence, neither can we without faith: And if we must receive Divine influence before we can come to Christ, we must receive faith also. But this grace or influence, which is the foundation or beginning of salvation, is not the faith described by the Apostle; but only one part, and this part we hesitate not to say, but we are ready to prove, is the gift of God.

2. The evidence or conviction of things not seen. This part of faith can in no sense be the gift of God; this is the part which man as a rational being is called upon to perform. This conviction arises not from any sense either of body or mind; but from evidence presented to the rational powers, going to prove that the things exist. The mind examines the evidences—carefully weighs them, and thus becomes acquainted with their force; the rational powers perceive their weight, and receive the conviction that the things exist. This is the only way that we can become believers in any thing. But divine influence is necessary to evangelical faith, because the mind of man is naturally so blinded, that he has no power to discern the things that are spiritual—See 1. Cor. ii, 14. And as salvation is a spiritual science, he must have spiritual discernment before he can comprehend its principles and evidences, so as to become a believer in it. But when he receives this influence or light, which is a part of faith as described by the Apostle, he proceeds in the exercise of it as he does in the exercise of those natural powers, by which he becomes a believer in Astronomy or any natural science: man may be a believer in natural sciences by the light of nature; but he can not be a true believer in Christ without the light of grace.

The conviction which is produced in the mind, which we call faith in this sense, occupies the mean between doubt and sensation; of this kind is my conviction of London. The evidence which has produced this conviction is human testimony; I have heard many say that they had been there—I have read different accounts of it—I have heard nothing contradictory, nor have I read any thing; I have therefore no doubt, and yet I could not swear that there is such a place, because I have not seen it. But how did I arrive at this conviction? By examining the evidence; had I stopped my ears and refused to read, which I could have done, this conviction would not have been produced. The strongest degree of faith is to be free from doubt; to go farther than this is intuitive perception; to stop short of it is in some degree unbelief. Faith in every case must be in proportion to the evidence perceived by the mind, as the mind cannot reject that which it perceives. There may be many things which have a direct tendency to prevent or hinder faith: But the way in which this is done, is by

preventing the mind from perceiving the force or weight of the evidences ; for when they are perceived clearly by the mind, faith in proportion will be the inevitable result. But in order to this, the evidences must be carefully examined and impartially weighed, before the mind can perceive their force ; and as a perception of their force is indispensable to faith, he that refuses to divest himself of prejudices, and to give the subject a careful examination, must die an unbeliever as sure as he lives. Faith in this respect cannot be the gift of God ; because it is the result of the rational powers weighing the evidences presented to the mind, and nothing else ; and as the evidence or conviction of things not seen, is a part of faith, and as this conviction can only be produced in the way just described ; and as this part is essential to the existence of the faith described by the Apostle, we say in conclusion, that evangelical faith is part the gift of God, and part the act of the creature, and that saving faith can no more exist without our part than it can without God's. We might quote many authorities in support of this view of faith, but its own rationality must recommend it.

Permit us to illustrate the subject by giving the case of two infidels who agreed to write against the Bible ; but in order to the more successful completion of their tasks, they perceived it necessary to examine the evidence of its truth, that they might bring what they had conceived to be the stronger evidence of its falsehood against it with certain success. But the result was, when they had examined the evidence in favor of the Bible, & carefully weighed them & contrasted them with what they could collect against it—those in favour far outweighed those opposed, and they became believers in revealed religion, and wrote in its defence. These cases shew precisely how the mind arrives at faith. We could add that faith is spoken of as our own act, and not as the gift of God. We are nowhere commanded to pray for faith ; and if faith be altogether the gift of God, of all gifts it would be the most important—surely mercy would have left some encouraging promise—surely some of the saints of old would have sought this gift by prayer ; but no such promise can be found—no such prayer can be seen. The disciples did pray, Lord increase our faith : a prayer going farther than this cannot be found. We fear that there are many waiting for what they call the gift of faith, and sinning against God by not improving the grace which they have received. The last objection that can be brought against the doctrine contended for under this head of our discourse, is, that as part of faith is the gift of God ; and as faith cannot exist without that part, none can have faith except those to whom God gives that part, and if God withholds it, those from whom it is withheld cannot be saved. We will give this objection a passing thought, in which we pledge ourselves to prove that all that is necessary on the part of God to give, to ena-

ble man to believe to the salvation of his soul is given to every man; and this sweeps away the last retreat of this deadly Antinomian error. The reason why none can believe in Christ without divine influence, we have already shewn, and also the nature of that influence. We now proceed to redeem our pledge, that this influence is given to every man, John viii, 12. "I am the light of the world." We must understand the world here, to be the intellectual world; and in John i, 9, it is said that Christ is the true light which lighteth every man who cometh into the world: And in Titus ii, 11: "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men." If light is given to every man, and the grace which brings salvation hath appeared unto all men; and it is even so if the Bible be true, and if it be not true, we will dismiss the subject, and say, let us eat drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die—all men are in a state in which they can take the first step; or in other words, believe the first necessary truth; and if this grace be improved and this truth believed, this exercise of faith will be a means through which more grace will be received; this grace will give ability to believe other truths through which an increase of grace will be given, and this increase of grace will prepare for a stronger exercise of faith, and this stronger exercise of faith will receive more grace, and thus we are raised higher and higher, if we improve the grace we receive, until we are enabled to lay hold of all the fulness of Christ. From the preceding premises, we think the conclusions fair and undeniable, that every man in the world has something to do to be saved, and that he can believe all that God has made necessary to his salvation; and that election to eternal life is conditional in the case of every man—depending on that faith which every man has power to exercise if he improve the grace which is freely given him, but which no man can be coerced into in any way, because it can only be obtained by the voluntary consent of the mind, exercising itself in weighing the evidences in the case, and judging of them with impartiality, as we have seen in the preceding investigation of this subject.

Seeing then that men are not lost because the Lord has made no way for their salvation, we present the reasons given by our Saviour why men are lost: "And ye will not cometo me that ye might have life."—John v, 40. "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did so do ye."—Acts vii, 51. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the Prophets and stonest them which were sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not."—Math. xxiii, 37.—"Say unto them, *As I live* saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked ;

but that the wicked turn from his way and live : turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways ; for why will ye die, O house of Israel :²² Ezek. xxxiii, 11. From these declarations of the Saviour it is still further evident that the reason why man is not saved is in the man and not in God ; and that man might remove it, and submit to be saved by grace.

But it may be asked, if man obtains salvation by using the means of grace, will not this make a discordant note in heaven? Man being saved in part by what he had done? We reply, man is not saved by what he does; nor, for what he does; but by grace through what he does—that the conditions required have no legal nor abstract merit in them will appear evident from the following considerations : Man has nothing independent of his Maker : man can set up no independent claim to any thing he has in possession—For “the earth is the Lord’s and the fulness thereof.”—Ps. xxiv, 1.—“For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills.”—Ps. l. 10.—“The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine, as for the world and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them.”—Ps. lxxxix, 11. If all things in heaven and earth are the Lord’s, man can never bring his Maker under any obligations by giving him any thing in the world ; this would be to give him that which is already his, and to bring him in debt thereby. From this view we see that the King has no more to give in exchange for heaven than the poor peasant.

Nor can man merit any thing, by what he can do ; for all the powers of his body and soul, are created powers ; and as all things were created for the Creator, and not for the creature, (see Col. i, 16,) the body and soul of man are the entire property of God, and therefore man can never bring the Almighty under obligations, by employing the powers of either or both in his service. From these considerations it appears, that if man had never fallen, he could do nothing to merit that salvation which is eternal.

But since the fall what can man do to merit salvation ? He has no power to keep the law—no heart to love God ; but a carnal mind that is enmity against God, (see Rom. viii, 7:)—until it is renewed by divine grace : And the Saviour says expressly, that after we have done all that we can do, we are unprofitable servants.—Luke xvii, 10. We conclude from these facts that man cannot merit heaven on any ground, whatever, and therefore cannot glory in any thing but the free grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

We have been the more particular in giving our views on this point, because we have been repeatedly charged by our opponents with holding the very reverse—notwithstanding this point has been clearly set forth in all the standard works of our Church.—See Methodist Dis. page 11, Art. 9.—“We are accounted righteous

before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works or deservings. Wherefore, that we are justified by faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort."

And yet we have something to do; though we cannot buy salvation we can supplicate grace, and we must beg for mercy in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. And we must beg it too, relying alone on the merits of his death; and not upon our prayers in any sense. These works give man no room to glory, save in the cross of Christ; for surely no man ever gloried in being a beggar,—if he did, few, very few envied his crown of rejoicing. And unprofitable as these works must be to God, and dishonourable as they may seem to the unrenewed heart of man, we see the infinite wisdom of God, in fixing them as the condition of *our salvation*. For as the dark empire of sin, which commenced in *Eden* was founded in pride, and superstructured by believing a lie; so believing, the truth opens those doors through which the prisoners may escape to the shadowing Rock. Yea, it grasps the dark pillars and Collossian towers of the kingdom of night; and sinks and buries them in the primeval shadows of the nether world, never, never to rise: And humility annihilates the foundation [pride.] Thus all is gone—the kingdom of darkness removed, and a flood of day, from the light of life poured down, which kindred earths with heaven! "O! the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God."

This brings us to the third thing proposed, to shew in what sense the doctrine of unconditional election and reprobation is true; in order to this we proceed to prove—

3. That those texts of Scripture, which speak of unconditional election have no relation to eternal glory; but to time privileges, which may be so abused as to incur the Divine displeasure, and bring down eternal destruction on those blessed with them; and that those who are unconditionally reprobated, may, nevertheless, come at last, to life eternal.

This to some, will appear a task impossible. But the *Scriptures* cannot lie; and therefore cannot be a system of contradictions; but ONE grand chain of *Truth and Light*, let down from heaven, on which men may ascend to that glory, which flows in perennial streams, from the eternal THRONE, emblazoned with the indescribable brightness of ETERNITY.

And if those texts will not admit of a reconciliation with the doctrine contended for under the last head, we will have to reconcile those texts which were brought to support the doctrine of conditional election to eternal life, with the doctrine of unconditional election: this we have seen is impossible. We proceed to shew that the other is not only possible, but easy and natural.

Some may tremble for this promise ; but we shall redeem it to the satisfaction of every unprejudiced mind—and even prejudice shall tremble, though it may not fall. All this we fully expect to accomplish in the sequel of our discourse.

The first passage to which we will call your attention, is, Rom. viii, 29, 30.—“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called : and whom he called, them he also justified : and whom he justified them he also glorified.” The calling, justification, and glorification here spoken of, which arose from the foreknowledge and predestination of God, had all taken place previous to the time in which the Apostle wrote this *Epistle*; for they are all spoken of in the present tense [time;] and are therefore too restricted to be applied to the calling, justification and glorification of the *elect*, many of whom are yet to be called, justified and glorified.

The true meaning of this calling, &c. will be better understood, if we take into view the subject the Apostle had under consideration. He is here vindicating the Divine economy in calling the Gentiles to partake with the Jews of the privileges of Christianity; and establishing the Gentiles, in the hope of their calling, by shewing them that God purposed to call them to these privileges, even when he called Abraham. In order to this, we must take into view the state of the Church generally at that time, and of the Church of Rome in particular. The Jews at first thought that Christ would set up a temporal kingdom for their exclusive benefit; as they had always conceived themselves to be the elect of God, and that all other nations were reprobates. And when they were disappointed in this hope, many rejected the Saviour as an impostor ; and even those who believed on him, still retained their former prejudices in favour of their exclusive claims, to all the blessings of the Covenant of mercy. This led them to reject the Gentiles, as having no right to any of the blessings of *christianity*.—That this was the state of the Church generally, is evident from the fact, that a council was held at Jerusalem to decide this very question.—See Acts, 15th ch. The question was whether the Gentiles, as Gentiles could be received into the Church, or must they first become Jews by circumcision; and then as Jews, approach the Saviour? The Jews had always received proselytes from the Gentile nations, and still contended that they must be made Jews before they could be made christians. Hence the Jew was unwilling to fellowship the Gentile, and the Gentile was afraid to assert his privilege as a member of the *body of Christ*.—Thus was brotherly love banished from some of the churches; Some members (the Jews) boasting of their fancied superiority.

looked down on the others with contempt, while those who were thus contemned (the Gentiles) were led to doubt and fear; and thus dejected were exposed to many temptations. This was the situation of the Church at Rome when Paul wrote his Epistle to the Romans. These were the circumstances in which he wrote, and if we carefully examine the *Epistle*, we shall find that this question is the burden of the first eleven chapters.

The Apostle introduces the Epistle by informing the Romans, that he was called to be an Apostle, and that by Jesus Christ, he and the other Apostles had received grace, and an Apostleship unto all nations.—Ch. I, 1—5. Paul had never been at Rome when he wrote this Epistle. From this fact we may at once discover one of his leading designs, to prepare the Gentiles to receive him when he should come unto them with the offer of life. This he does by shewing the Gentiles that they were as favourably related to God as the Jews were—See Chs. 3 and 4; and at the same time reproves the Jews for their arrogating to themselves the exclusive privileges of the covenant of grace. In ch. 3, and from v. 9—31, he shews the Jews clearly and irrefragably that they were no better than the Gentiles, notwithstanding their boasted privileges.

He also shews them that salvation was not by the works of the law; but by faith.—Verses 28—9, He says: “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Is he the God of the Jew only? is he not also of the Gentile? Yes of the Gentiles also,” (v. 30.) “Seeing it is one God which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision though faith.” He then shews that even Abraham was justified by faith and not by the Law. See ch. iv, 3; and that salvation was through faith, that it might by grace, to the end, that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not to that only which is of the law (the Jewish nation,) but that also which was of the faith of Abraham [the Gentile world] who is the father of us all. The argument is continued (in v. 17,) by shewing, that the original promise made to Abraham, Gen. xvii, 5, included the Gentiles; for Abraham was promised that he should be the father of many nations; not one nation, (the Jews,) but many nations; consequently, it was the original design of the ALMIGHTY to extend salvation further than the nation of the Jews—He also shews that the Gentiles who were thus provided for in the covenant of *mercy* could be saved without being circumcised, and taking upon them the yoke of the law; for Abraham was justified before he was circumcised, and he received circumcision as the seal of the righteousness of faith which *he had*, yet being uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also—And that the Jews could not be saved with-

out walking in his steps; as he was saved by faith, they must be saved in the same way, or they could not be his seed according to the promise.—See ch. iv, v. 11, 31.

In the 5. ch. he showed the nature of this justification by faith, to which both Jew and Gentile might attain peace with God,—which enables its possessor to rejoice, even in tribulation—and that much higher attainments might be had, and higher privileges enjoyed, he infers from the goodness of God in sending his Son to die for the world of the ungodly, and thus encourages them, (both Jew and Gentile) to seek after more of the divine life; assuring them that God, who withheld not his Son, would freely give them all things.

In ch. 6 he shews this salvation to be, not only a salvation from guilt, but also from the corruption of fallen nature. This regeneration he called a death to sin, and a life to righteousness.—It exonerated from the bondage of corruption, that they might bring forth fruit unto holiness, the end of which is everlasting life.

In ch. 7. he shews the design of the law, and the nature of our exercise of mind, when through the law we become convinced of sin, and of the impossibility of being saved by any thing we can do.—We are brought to cry out “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death.” He concludes this chapter by giving thanks to God who giveth the victory through Jesus Christ. The 8th chapter commences with describing the happy state of salvation thus obtained through Jesus Christ. It is here placed in lively contrast with the horrors of the state described in the preceding chapter. They are now made free, by the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus; from the law of sin and death, and not by the Jewish law, which was weak through the flesh, not having power to renew the heart, and therefore could not save from inbred corruption. But this salvation which is obtained through the redemption of Jesus Christ, and wrought by the agency of the spirit, extended to the renewing of the heart; and thereby gives man ability to fulfil the law, by walking after the spirit. He continues to speak of this happy state of grace which is more clearly described here than in any other part of the sacred records we have noticed, until he comes to the 17th verse, where he makes mention of some of those afflictions to which they were exposed:—he encourages them to bear up under their weight, assuring them that the Divine spirit would aid their infirmities, and that all those things should work for good to those who are called according to the purpose of God, and assures them that they were called according to his purpose in the words now under consideration—“For whom he did foreknow,” &c.

We have been the more prolix in our observations on the

previous part of this Epistle, that we might have a clear view of the Apostle's design; and this we think we have clearly seen. 1. That there was no difference between the Jew and Gentile; for they were both sinners before God. 2. That salvation is by faith to both Jew and Gentile, and not by the law, as the Jews believed; for Abraham was saved by faith. 3. That the Gentiles were included in the promise made to Abraham; and that they were as favorably related to God as the Jews were, having as ready access to God by faith as they. 4. That the Gentiles were now called to partake of the blessings of the covenant of mercy, according to the original design of God, which had been expressed in the promise made to Abraham.

He then foreknew the Gentiles, and then predestinated those whom he knew would believe, to be conformed to the image of his Son, and those whom he foreknew, [the Gentiles,] he also called by the preaching of the Gospel; and those that believed he justified freely, through the redemption that is in Jesus; and those that he justified he also glorified, by taking some to Heaven, and rendering many others *illustrious*, by dignifying them with the privileges of the Church of Christ. This is the true meaning of this passage; and I am bold to say, that to apply this text to individual and eternal election, is a gross perversion of the Apostle's meaning.

But it may be said that the word to glorify, means salvation in heaven; and therefore our solution is not correct. To this we answer in the words of Dr. A. CLARK. "The word *Doxa*, which we render *glory*, and *Doxazoo* to *glorify*, both mean to *render illustrious, eminent, &c. &c.* in various parts of the New Testament; and in this sense the verb is used in John xii. 4—xi. 23, 28—xiii. 31, 32—xiv. 13—xv. 8—xxi. 19.—Acts iii. 13, and in Romans xi. 13, in none of which places eternal beatification can be intended." Having thus shewn that it was God's purpose to call the Gentiles to salvation through Jesus Christ, and that this purpose had been maintained and accomplished by the *Almighty*, he concludes that God is certainly for them, [Gentiles:] and if God be for them, he enquires, who can be against them? If God spared not his own Son, but gave him freely for their redemption, what will he withhold?—Surely nothing that is needful to support them under the weight of the great fight of affliction that was daily coming upon them; with this support none of these things should be able to separate them from the love of Christ Jesus, but they should be so overruled as to work for their good.—These conclusions close the chapter.

He commences the 9th chapter by preparing the minds of the Jews for what he was about to declare, more clearly, viz: That God had rejected the Jewish nation because of their unbelief.

This he does by expressing his sorrow for his brethren, his kinsmen, according to the flesh, in the most affectionate manner. See verses 1, 2, 3. That he might the more successfully convince the Jews that God had rejected them, he shews them that they were mistaken in claiming the blessings of the Covenant on the ground of being the natural descendants of Abraham; and that the children of the promise were accounted for the seed. This he does in the most masterly manner, by shewing that Abraham's seed were not all embraced in the promise; but in Isaac should his seed be called. This was an unanswerable argument, for Abraham had seven other sons, and they were all excluded; and one of them was heir to the Patriarchal inheritance. Abraham willed that Ishmael his first born should be the heir; but the ALMIGHTY said in Isaac shall thy seed be called. This was a sovereign act of the Deity; and if seven-eighths of Abraham's *immediate descendants* were excluded who had done no wrong, what could the rebellious and stiff-necked Jews expect, on the ground of being Abraham's children? Their claim before the force of this argument, vanishes like the mist before the rising sun.

This sovereignty of JEHOVAH was farther manifested in the choice of Jacob, and the rejection of Esau; and that the seed according to the flesh was not heir to the promise, does most clearly appear from this case also; for Esau was Isaac's son, his *elder son* the heir to the Patriarchal inheritance—yet *Jacob*, the younger, was chosen, and *Esau*, the elder rejected. But as the case of Jacob and Esau is particularly relied on by the Calvinists to support their doctrine, we shall give it a more particular consideration. “For the children being not yet born,” &c.

In our previous observations on the Apostle's design in this Epistle, we saw that he was speaking of nations, and not of individuals—of time privileges—not of eternal beatitudes; and these we propose to show are his subject and design still. That we may have the best and clearest possible view of this subject, we refer to Gen. xxv. 23. “And the Lord said unto her, [*Rebecca*,] Two nations *are* in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and *the one* people shall be stronger than *the other* people; and the elder shall serve the younger.”—Here nations and not individuals, are not only meant but clearly expressed; and as the Apostle is arguing a national question, we hesitate not to say, he uses it in this sense, and this only. This will appear more evident from the fact, that it is not true when applied to individuals; and surely none will charge the Apostle with so base a perversion of God's word, as to make an application of it which would destroy its truths.

We say in an individual application it is not true—Esau did not serve Jacob, but the reverse; Jacob served Esau. See Gen. xxxiv

4, and xxxiii. 3, 13, where Jacob acknowledges Esau to be his Lord, first in his servants, and then in his own person; and bowed himself seven times to the ground in obeisance to him. Nor does it appear that Esau's immediate posterity served Jacob or his descendants. Jacob and his children were poor shepherds, and went down into Egypt for bond-men; while Esau's sons were twelve Dukes in the land of Edom. But this servitude is true, nationally, for the Jews were a much greater nation than the Edomites, the descendants of Esau, and exercised dominion over them, particularly in the days of DAVID and SOLOMON. And as this text is true, only in a national application, it cannot be used in truth in any other sense; and as the Apostle spoke as he was moved by the *Holy Ghost*, he could not lie, and therefore could not have used it in any other light.

Nor is the love and hatred here spoken of individual love and hatred. This does not only appear from what has been said, but from the fact, that the prophet whom the Apostle quotes, speaks of nations, and not individuals. "*Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord; yet I loved Jacob and I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness. Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the Lord of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people against whom the Lord hath indignation forever.*" Mal. i. 2,—4. That God never hated Esau as an individual is still further proven by the promise that his "dwelling should be the fatness of the earth, and of the dews of Heaven from above." See Gen. xxvii. 39. Nor is the love and hatred here spoken of eternal: For it must be acknowledged by all who have read the *Scriptures*, that many of the Jews were eternally lost: St. Paul tells us of twenty-three thousand who fell in one day under the ANGER of God. See 1. Cor. x. 5—8. And the Saviour told the self righteous Pharisees, "That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of Heaven, but the children of the kingdom, [the Jews] shall be cast out." See Mat. viii. 11, 12. Again. The Lord declared that he would laugh at their calamity, and mock when their fear should come. See Prov. i. 26, and Isaiah lxxv. 12.

It cannot be necessary to add any thing more to prove that many of the Jews were lost; this would have been admitted by many without argument. We have most certainly proved that this love was not an eternal love, but a love that bestowed time blessings, which were so abused as to bring down the eternal displeasure of God. The hatred of Esau was not an eternal hatred, though Malachi says Edom is a people against whom the Lord hath in-

dignation forever: For John, in the Revelation, tells us that he saw an innumerable company, saved in white, before the throne; and that in this company there were some from every nation, kindred and tongue under Heaven; consequently some of the Edomites were saved. This point is so clear that we will not pursue the argument one step farther.

From the preceding view of facts, we see clearly that the election here spoken of, is an election to time privileges, that may be so abused as to incur the displeasure of God, and bring down his wrath on those blessed with them; and this really did take place in the destruction of many of the Jews: And that the reprobation here taught, is a reprobation or hatred, which deprived the Edomites of those peculiar blessings with which the Jews were blessed; yet if the Edomites, [called Esau,] would improve the smaller privileges with which they were blessed, they could secure the Divine favour, and get to Heaven, as many of them actually did, God's hatred towards them notwithstanding. But to apply this passage to the doctrine of unconditional election and reprobation to eternal life and death, is foreign from the meaning of Gen. xxv 23, and Mal. i. 5; and also the use the Apostle makes of it in this place; and is a perversion which can only be excused on the ground of being ignorant of the *Scriptures*, and of the power of God. The Apostle also shows that the Lord bestowed those blessings regardless of merit; for Jacob was confirmed in the covenant of promise in the very act of deception and intrigue: See the account of Isaac's blessing Jacob, Gen. xxvii, 18,—30.

In verse 14, the Apostle enquires, "Is there unrighteousness with God?" Here he shews the Jews that God was not unrighteous in rejecting them, as they might vainly think. He does this by introducing the declaration made to Moses:—

"I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy; and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." verse 15. This verse refers to Exodus, xxxiii, 19, which has reference to the sin of idolatry, that the Israelites committed in making and worshiping the golden calf; for which the Lord threatened to destroy them, and confirm the promise in Moses. "Now therefore, let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them; and that I may consume them; and I will make of thee a great nation," Exod. xxxii 10. Their destruction was respited lest the Egyptians should rejoice, and say that the Lord had brought them out of Egypt for mischief; but the Lord assured Moses that they should not go unpunished; their names should be blotted out of his *Book*. Nevertheless, his angel should go before them; but while they were guided by the angel the Lord fulfilled his threatening, by sending plagues on the people. The plagues wasted them gradually until all who were guilty of idolatry were destroyed. This

gradual destruction gave time for their posterity to arise and take their place, and thus the nation was kept from being extinguished. And the Lord assured Moses, that this respite of their destruction was not for their righteousness or his prayers, but of sovereign mercy. How pertinent and cogent is this argument, when taken in connexion with the preceding part of the Epistle; and how fully does it overthrow the arguments of the Jews, that God acted unrighteous in rejecting them: For if the Jews in the case of *Aaron's calf* had forfeited all claim to the Covenant of Promise, as the Apostle clearly proved, even by Moses in whom they trusted; and as they were then saved from destruction by the sovereign mercy of God; and as he would have been just in rejecting them at that time, he could be so yet; seeing that they had continued their idolatry, until they had become as bad as the Gentiles; yea, even worse, for the name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles through them. See chap. ii. 24. From these facts, the Apostle concludes: So then it is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." The Jews being the peculiar people of God did not depend on any thing willed or sought after, by any, or all of them; for Abraham willed that Ishmael should inherit the promise, and Isaac willed that Esau should be the heir; and Esau ran to get venison that he might be confirmed in it. But God chose Isaac and Jacob contrary to the will of Abraham and Isaac, and had continued the Jews as his peculiar people, who had done nothing to merit this favor, but much to call for the righteous displeasure of God in their destruction.

These facts do not only justify the *Almighty* in rejecting the Jews, but also in calling the Gentiles, who had equal claims with them; but especially as those blessings were of the sovereign pleasure of God, freely given to whomsoever he chose.

And to place this beyond all doubt, he introduces the case of Pharaoh, as being precisely similar to theirs. God had determined to destroy all those who worshipped the calf, yet they were not destroyed immediately, but spared for a time, and then destroyed in a way to promote the *Divine glory* as we have seen. The Jews who were rejected, although they were not immediately destroyed, should, like their fathers, in the case alluded to, certainly be at last. And as Pharaoh, whose cup of iniquity was full, was raised up from the plague of *boils* and *blains*, which had been sent to destroy him, and his destruction respited to the overthrow in the *Red Sea*.

So the destruction of the Jews being respited, did not prove that God had still designs of mercy towards them, as they no doubt argued: For if God spared Pharaoh, who was an enemy to God, the Jews, and all righteousness, and thus saved him from feeling the bitter pains of hell so soon as he otherwise would, they could not conclude that they were still the favorites of *Heaven*,

because they were not yet cut off. The reason why God spared Pharaoh, was that he might shew his power, and that his name might be declared throughout all the earth; which was done in delivering the Israelites, a feeble band, from the hand of Pharaoh, and destroying him and his powerful host in the *Red Sea*: And if God saw that he could be more glorified by respiting the destruction of the Jews to a future time, they must not rashly conclude that they were still the favorites of *Heaven*. The Apostle concludes this argument: "Therefore he will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth."

It may not be amiss to spend a moment on the hardening spoken of in this place. And as the hardening of Pharaoh's heart is particularly alluded to, we would enquire what was the design of it? It is manifest that Pharaoh's heart was not hardened with a design to effect his damnation; and if it was not hardened for this purpose, *Calvinism* derives no support from it. This clearly appears from the fact, that Pharaoh had committed the most aggravated sins, before God hardened his heart. *Sins* enough to damn him forever; and such sins too, as hardly admitted of pardon.

Witness his oppression of the Israelites, requiring of them the full tale of brick when they were denied straw, and beating them for not accomplishing impossibilities—putting all the male children to death—horrid murderer! And when Moses and Aaron delivered the message of God to him, he proudly replied: "*Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice, to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.*" All these dreadful acts of wickedness took place before the Lord hardened his heart; and surely his cup of iniquity must have been full, or if not, oppression, murder and blasphemy could not fill it. And if the cup of iniquity was full, the hardening of his heart must have had reference to something other than his damnation. But we are not left to conjecture on this subject; the design of the *Almighty* is clearly expressed—That he might not let the Israelites go. And thus the Lord would multiply his signs and wonders in the land of Egypt; overthrowing all the Egyptian gods, and confounding all the Magicians; and thereby prove that he was the Lord God, whom all men should worship—the God of the whole earth. See *Exod. vii. 3—5*.

Again. It must be admitted by all, that repentance was necessary in Pharaoh in order that he might be saved; and if so, there was no need to harden his heart to secure his destruction, for the Saviour says: "No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him." *John vi. 44*. Repentance is coming to Christ; and if we cannot come to Christ except the *Father* draw us, all that was necessary for the Lord to do in the case of Pharaoh, was not to draw him; this would have made his repentance

impossible, and his damnation inevitably certain. From this view of the subject, we see also that the hardening of Pharoah's heart was unconnected with his eternal destruction. It is nowhere said that God hardened Pharoah's heart against the calls and invitations of mercy; nor is it necessary to harden any man's heart against them to effect his destruction; for if the Almighty do not give them, eternal woe is certain in the case of every man; and to give those calls and then harden the heart against them, is doing two things to accomplish that which would have been certain had neither of them been done; which to say the least, would be acting very foolishly:—a charge which will hardly be made to lay against the Deity—and in whatever point of light we view this subject, we see that the hardening of Pharoah's heart was unconnected with his everlasting destruction.

And we also see that it is not necessary to harden any man's heart to effect his destruction—all that is necessary for the Lord to do, is to withhold his spirit. But to give his spirit to soften and draw the heart to him, that he may harden it, is labour in vain, and insincerity, with which the Deity cannot be charged—*God hardens no man's heart to damn him.*

And while we see the Lord did not harden Pharoah's heart to effect his destruction; we see that he done it in mercy to the Jews, and to the world; for thereby the *true God* was made known to all the *earth*—and thus we see that God hardens the heart through mercy to others, and not to destroy those hardened. But to say that God hardens men to damn them, is one of the most foolish and absurd notions that ever entered into the bewildered brain of man.

But as the case of Pharoah is often brought by the Calvinists to support their doctrine, we shall give it a still further consideration. "For the Scriptures saith unto Pharaoh, even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth." Rom. ix, 17. The Calvinists argue, God from eternity, in his unchangeable purpose, raised up Pharoah for the very purpose of committing all the sins which he did commit; and that he hardened his heart with special reference thereto, and that he (Pharoah) could no more help oppressing the Israelites, than he could his existence. If this view be correct, we cannot see how the Lord could be just in punishing him? But the answer is at hand, in the mouth of every Calvinist. But O! man, &c. as though they were the infallible successors of the Apostle, and privileged to apply the retort given to the rebellious and unreasonable Jews, to every man who desires reasonable evidence for his faith to rest on. But when we take a particular notice of the passage, we see that the raising up, was not bringing Pharoah into existence, but rais-

ing him up from the plague of *boils* and *blains*, which was calculated to destroy him, and it would have done it, had not the Almighty prevented the effect. But it may be argued that this cutting off from the earth was a future act, and therefore had nothing to do with the *boils* and *blains*; but was to take place in a future time, as is seen at the place.—Exod. ix 15.

If we admit this argument, it will not prove the point intended by its supporters, for this might all be true, and Pharoah, one of the elect. God raised him up from this view of the subject, as also from the express words of the place, not to commit *Sin*, but to be cut off from the earth by pestilence,—and surely a man might die of pestilence, and yet get to heaven.

We would be contented with this view of the passage, if it were not contradictory; for it proves nothing in favour of Calvinism; all they build upon it must fall. Although it is expressly said, “For now I will stretch out my hand, that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence; and thou shalt be cut off from the face of the earth.”—Exod. ix, 15. Yet the Egyptians were not destroyed by pestilence, neither was Pharoah; but him and his host were drowned in the Red Sea. Dr. A. CLARK says, (and better authority we cannot get,) that this verse is not translated correctly. He says: “In the Hebrew, the verbs are in the *past* tense, and not in the *future*, as our translation improperly expresses them, by which means a contradiction appears in the text: for neither Pharoah nor his people *were smitten by a pestilence*, nor was he by any kind of mortality *cut off from the earth*.” “If the words be translated as they ought, in the subjunctive mood, or in the *past* instead of the *future*, this seeming contradiction to facts, as well as all ambiguity, will be avoided—*For if now I HAD STRETCHED OUT (had sent forth my hand) and had smitten thee and thy people with the pestilence, thou SHOULDST HAVE BEEN cut off from the earth. But truly on this very account have I caused thee to SUBSIST, that I MIGHT cause thee to see my power, and that my name MIGHT be declared throughout all the earth; or in all this LAND.*” This translation, which is no doubt the correct one, does not say, nor even intimate that God raised up Pharoah to sin; but to shew him his power, and to make his (God’s) name known throughout all the earth. We will conclude our remarks on this passage with a quotation from Dr. A. CLARK, which precisely accords with our own views, and which is fully, and undeniably sustained, by the preceding arguments. “The sum of all is (speaking of a Calvinistic Commentator whose words he quotes) that this man was raised up by God, *in every sense*, for God to shew his power in his destruction; so man speaks, thus God has not spoken.”

The Apostle next introduces the Jews as replying to his argument, “why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will.” Rom. ix, 19.

He replies, "But O! man, who art thou," &c. He shews the Jews that their enquiries are vain, and their reply impertinent; for although God had exercised his sovereign power in giving and withholding his favour; yet the sense in which he gave, and withheld, did not necessarily make them virtuous or vicious: for he had bestowed his favours on the Jews and withheld them from the Gentiles: and yet the Jews were as wicked as the Gentiles;—this he had fully shewn in the preceding part of his Epistle.

This bestowing and withholding, had no necessary connexion with salvation in heaven,—for many of the Jews on whom mercy was bestowed had went to hell, and many of the Gentiles from whom it was withheld had went to heaven; as we saw when considering the case of Jacob and Esau. From this view, (and we hesitate not to say it is the correct one,) we see that all had it in their power to get to heaven; and though God had bestowed greater privileges on some, than he had on others, yet those who had received most, had most to improve; God required improvement in an exact proportion to what he had bestowed, as in the case of the talents; and thus all had an equal opportunity to get to heaven, though they were not equal in time privileges. And can any man reply against God, for withholding from him certain privileges which he bestows on another, when he from whom they were withheld is no more disabled to get to heaven, the *great end for which all men were created*, than he is on whom they are bestowed—much less can any reply, that in being wicked, they had not resisted his will.

The Apostle proceeds to the case of the potter and the clay, by which he shews the Jews, that God had a right to reject them, and call the Gentiles to fill their place, as his peculiar people: for he had warned them near seven hundred years previous, that they stood as a nation on the condition of obedience. God had said by the mouth of the Prophet, "*At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it: If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them.*" The Prophet was directed to inform the Israelites that this should be their case if they did not continue to obey the Lord—And the Lord enquires, if he could not do it in the strictest justice. This enquiry was made by referring to the parable of the potter and the clay. The Prophet was directed to go down to the potter's house, where the Lord said he would cause him to hear his words: "And behold he [the potter] wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it."—Jer. xviii, 3, 4. And as the Jews had marred themselves by disobedience, God surely had a right to dishonor them after they had dishonoured themselves, and their God. A bare

reference to this parable shows most positively, that the Apostle is speaking of nations, and not individuals—of time blessings, and not eternal beatitudes; and that these national blessings were conditional; for the Jews who were first blessed with them, and who were vessels to honor, were, for unbelief, reprobated, & made vessels to dishonour; while the Gentiles who were first the vessels of dishonor were made the vessels to honor by the same sovereign power that the Jews first were. And it is *strange ! passing strange !* that men should have given the Apostle's words any other application, with the Scriptures before their eyes. And we further see, that many who were honoured with the honor here spoken of, were at last dishonoured in hell, and many that were first dishonoured, were at last honoured in heaven.

The Apostle continues his argument by quotations from Hosea and Isaiah, shewing from these Prophets that God had in their time intended to call the Gentiles, and spoke of it by them—and closes the chapter with shewing that the reason that the Jews had not attained to righteousness, was, because they sought it not by faith, but by the deeds of the Law.

In the 10th Chapter he assures the Jews, that although God had rejected them as a nation from being his peculiar people, and had thus dishonoured them; yet as individuals, they might be saved in heaven in the very same way the Gentiles were. In the 12th verse he says: "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek, for the same Lord over all, is rich unto all that call upon him—(Verse 13:) For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." He closes this chapter with quotations from Moses and Isaiah, who foretold the present state of the Jews, and also the calling of the Gentiles.

The 11th chapter is introduced by declaring that God had not cast off all the Jews; but that there was in the language of our text "at this present time also there remaineth a remnant according to the election of grace." The Apostle further shews the reason why all the Jews were not saved; did not attain to the election of grace: Their going about to establish their own righteousness, and refusing to receive salvation by faith; for this they were blinded, and given to a spirit of slumber;—and that the fall of the Jews had been a means through which the riches of grace had come to the Gentiles—but that the conquest of grace would be still more complete and glorious, if the Jews would return to God and accept of salvation through faith in Christ—This he proves they might do: "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief that he might have mercy on all"—(v. 32,) both Jews and Gentiles—He then exclaims, O! the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God."

We see that the Apostle concludes after having answered all the

objections of the Jews, that both Jews and Gentiles might be saved thro' faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; yea "whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord." We have been the more particular in our remarks on this Epistle, because at this distance from the time, and circumstances in which it was written many do not perceive the Apostle's design, nor meaning. And from the view we have taken we must plainly see, that instead of giving support to the doctrine of *unconditional election and reprobation* as some have believed, the first eleven chapters is one *entire, unanswerable, yea, irresistible* argument in favour of the doctrine of general atonement, in which it is most clearly shewn that all men, both Jew and Gentile **MAY BE SAVED THROUGH FAITH IN OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.** We will conclude our observations on this text and the Epistle generally, in the words of a late distinguished and very learned Commentator: "If the doctrine of unconditional, eternal election and reprobation be a doctrine of revelation, we must look for it somewhere else, than in the 8th and 9th chapters of Romans." "From thus carefully considering the Apostle's discourse, and taking in the scope of his design, and weighing the different expressions he uses, in connexion with the Scripture facts, and Scripture phrases employed in describing those facts; we must be fully convinced, that the doctrines of eternal, absolute, unconditional election and reprobation have no place here; and that nothing but a pre-established creed, and a total inattention to the Apostle's *scope and design* could ever have induced men to bind these Scriptures to the above purpose, and thus to endeavour to establish, as articles of faith, doctrines, which, far from producing *glory to God in the highest, and peace and good will among men*, have filled the Church of God with contention—set every man's sword against his brother, and thus done the work of *Apollyon* in the name of *Christ*. If men will maintain these, and such like, for *Scriptural* doctrines—doctrines repugnant to the Divine nature, it is but reasonable to request that it be done in the *spirit* of the gospel."

The next passage which we shall notice, is Eph. i, 4—6. "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." That we may have a clear view of the meaning of this text, we will consider to whom the Epistle was addressed, and their peculiar circumstances. The Epistle was addressed to the Church at Ephesus. This Church was situated similar to the Church at Rome. The Jews had a synagogue there, and exercised considerable influence over the minds of the Ephesian christians. To reconcile the Jew and Gentile christians, seems to be the main design of the Epistle. This will be evident to any that will carefully read it. The Ephesian christians, who were Gentiles, had

the same need of encouragement, that those at Rome had, and therefore the Apostle sets out with establishing their claim to the covenant of promise. This he does by assuring them, that God, when he laid the plan of salvation, before the foundation of the world, designed that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs with the Jews, and then predestinated them to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ.

That the Apostle had no allusion to individual election to eternal life, is evident from the fact, that the Ephesians were made partakers of salvation by faith. Though they had been predestinated from before the foundation of the world, they were not sealed with the holy spirit of promise, until they had believed on Christ, nor did they believe until they had heard the gospel. See verse 13. And in chapter 11. 8, he tells them that they are saved by grace through faith.

But to prove more clearly that the Apostle had reference to national or time blessings we will take a more extensive view of this Epistle. The Apostle commences the 2d chapter by contrasting the present state of the Ephesians with their former, and shews the dreadful condition that they were in before the quickening spirit was given; and that this quickening had raised them up to sit with the Jews in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. This is evident from the word *us* being used. Paul, who was a Jew, would not have used this term, had not the Jews and Gentiles been brought together in Christ! But it is clearly expressed in *vs. 11, 12, 13*. "Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past, Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision, by that which is called the circumcision in the flesh made by hands; [Jews] that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel [the Jewish church,] and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. But now, in Christ Jesus ye [Gentiles] who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ. (*v. 14.*)—For he is our peace who hath made both one, [Jew and Gentile,] and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; (*15*) having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments, contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain [Jew and Gentile] one new man, [the Christain Church,] so making peace, (*16.*) And that he might reconcile both unto God [Jew and Gentile] in one body [the Christian Church] by the Cross, having slain the enmity thereby; (*19*) And came and preached peace to you [Gentiles] which were afar off, and to them [Jews] that were nigh, (*18.*) For through him we both [Jew and Gentile] have access by one spirit to the father. (*19.*) Now therefore, ye [Gentiles] are no more strangers, and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God. (*20.*) And are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner Stone."

From these passages it undeniably appears that the Apostle is labouring to unite the Jews and Gentiles together, and not treating of individual salvation in heaven. But to proceed. He commences the third chapter by telling them that for this cause he was in bonds; for a dispensation of the grace of God was given unto him; his words are, "I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ, for you Gentiles." And this dispensation of the grace of God was, "That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs [with the Jews] and of the same body, and partakers of his promises in Christ by the gospel," v. 6. And in verse 7 he says, "Whereof I was made a minister according to the gift of the grace of God, given unto me." And in v. 8 "Unto me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." And the design of this preaching to the Gentiles was to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery of salvation, (see v. 9.) And that the eternal purpose of God had reference to this preaching, is evident from verse 11. "According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." Here the eternal purpose of God is explained by the Apostle; his explanation is that the gospel of salvation should be preached to both Jew and Gentile, and that both should have access to God by the same spirit; that both might obtain salvation through faith in Christ;—And thus we see that this Epistle proves the same doctrine the Epistle to the Romans does—That God designed even from before the foundation of the world, to extend, in the fulness of time, the blessing of redemption to all men, both Jew and Gentile, and that all men might be saved by grace through faith, and instead of affording any support to the doctrine of *Calvinism*, is a powerful argument against it.

The 2d chapter verse 23 of Acts, has been brought to prove the doctrine we are opposing "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands, have crucified and slain." Some have argued that the *Almighty* determined that the Jews should "commit the sin of crucifying the Saviour," but this is foreign from the true meaning of the text. God determined that Christ should die for the salvation of man, and foreseeing that the Jews would have malice enough to crucify the Redeemer, determined that he should die in that way, yet the Jews acted free and unnecessitated. This will appear more clearly from the following considerations: God's Prescience which is able to look through all events, saw the malice of the Jews. This malice must have had some kind of existence before it could have been *foreseen*. To say it had not, would be to say that God can in some sense, see that which exists in no sense, that is to see nothing, which is impossible. But it may be asked what kind of existence had the wickedness of the Jews before the foundation of the world. We answer: God determined to make man with certain powers, and therefore could

see man's coming into existence, arising out of his *own* determination, and as he had determined that man should possess the power of procreation, he could see the numerous offspring of Adam coming into existence through this power; and as he had determined that man should possess the power of volition, he could see all the *sins* of all men coming into being through the abuse of this power; yet all these existed, or were seen coming into existence, perfectly independent of the *Prescience* of the *Deity*, which only recognised their independent states, arising from causes as distinct from the fore-knowledge of God, and as unconnected with it, as any two things can be. Thus the Lord foresaw the existence of the Jews, and their wickedness; he saw that they would crucify the Saviour if he were delivered into their hands, and in the councils of wisdom, God saw that the object of the Saviour's death, would be as well, or better accomplished at that time, and in that way, than in any other time or way; therefore determined to deliver him into their hands, that they might shed his blood; the thing which God had determined should be done for the redemption to the world. But God did not decree that the Jews should crucify the Saviour; this is not said, or even intimated, but foreseeing that the Jews would freely, and certainly do it, if they should have it in their power, decreed that he should be delivered into their hands.

That this view is correct, will farther appear from the express declaration of the *Redeemer* when speaking of his death. *He says*, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again, no man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. This commandment have I received of my Father." John, chap. x, v. 17, 18. Here the Saviour says plainly that he had power to lay down his life of himself, and to take it up again; and consequently his dying through the malice of the Jews was on his part a matter of choice. And we hesitate not to say that Christ could have redeemed the world in some other way; a way unconnected with the wicked Jews; and also that their wickedness was the result of their own choice, not of God's decrees.

Many other passages might be considered, for many more have been brought to support the doctrine we have been controverting; but as none of them appear to speak so clearly, and fully to the point in contention as those we have been considering seem to do; nor are they as much relied on by the Calvinists themselves as those are, we will proceed no farther in this investigation, having clearly shown, we think, that those considered are perfectly reconcilable with the doctrine of *Conditional election to eternal life*.—And we hesitate not to affirm that there is not one text in all the Bible that gives the least support to the opposite doctrine, when properly understood. The way in which it has been kept in the

Church has been by applying those texts to eternal election and reprobation, which speak of unconditional election to time blessings, which may be enjoyed and the soul lost in eternity; and reprobation from time privileges, and, yet the soul may be saved in the end. Those who do not keep an eye to this distinction, are in great danger of becoming bewildered, and no surprise should be excited if they should become Calvinists. For the doctrine of unconditional election and reprobation, is clearly taught in the Scriptures, as we have seen, in our first head, and if those texts which have reference to this doctrine, be applied to election to eternal glory, and this they will be, if the mind is not informed of this distinction, we can hardly fail to become Calvinistic. A conviction of this fact has made us entertain a feeling of kindness and sympathy for our Calvinistic brethren, nor have we been disposed to censure them, for thinking differently from us; for we are inclined to believe that if we had not been so fortunate as to obtain a knowledge of this distinction, that the Bible would have made us Calvinists. We would here express our sincere thanks to the *parent of all good* for the merciful providence which gave us the privilege of reading Mr. Fletcher's Checks, and Dr. A. Clark's Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, and we would advise all who wish to understand this subject to read carefully, and impartially, those authors.

Permit us to answer an argument in favour of the doctrine we have been opposing, drawn from the Prescience of Deity. The argument runs thus: God is a being possessed of *Omniscience* by which he can at one glance see all things, past, present, and to come; and if God sees any thing in future, it must come to pass, as he foresaw it, or his fore-knowledge will be destroyed; this cannot be, and therefore, as God sees who will be saved, and who will be lost, just as many as he sees will be saved, must be saved, and just as many as he sees will be lost, must be lost.

Before we attend to this argument, we wish to remark, that this is begging the question; for *Calvin* rejected the idea that the decrees of God rested on his foreknowledge, and maintained that the reason why the Lord foreknew that certain things would come to pass was, because he had decreed them. The *Confession of Faith* of the Presbyterian church, teaches very nearly, if not altogether, the same doctrine; making salvation and damnation stand from eternity, without any reference to any thing foreseen in man. Nor did the Calvinists of the Reformation place the argument on this ground: This is one of the unintelligible refinements of Hopkinsianism—a thread drawn so fine that it is no thread, as will be seen in the preceding observations. And if it would not be thought beneath the dignity of the occasion, we would say that this argument puts the cart before the horse. God knows who will be lost, and he knows the reason also—but his knowledge is not the cause of their being lost; for this reason they must have been lost in some sense

before they could be subjects of knowledge. To say that knowledge recognized them as lost when they were not lost, is to say that God can know as certain, that which has no existence, which is not only an absurdity, but an impossibility. But it may be said that the damnation of those who now live, has no existence at this time, and yet God knows the fact, that they will be damned, we reply, all the causes which bring about the end—their destruction now exist in the view of God. God sees the end connected with the causes—Man's agency abused is the cause why he is lost. God sees who will abuse their agency; and therefore sees who will be lost; and in this connexion the destruction of all who will be lost, now exists; and in this connexion their destruction is a subject of knowledge, and in no other can it be. Sin is the cause of destruction.—God sees who will sin, and sees who will be lost—and he also sees that they might repent and believe, and thus be saved; but he sees they will not. God's knowledge is neither the cause of their sin, nor of their destruction: it only recognizes their sin arising out of abused freedom, and destruction arising out of sin. The astronomer foresees that the moon will be eclipsed at a certain time, and he sees the cause producing it; yet his knowledge is neither the cause of the one, nor the other, nor does it lay any necessity on either. This is precisely the relation that the foreknowledge of God stands in to man's destruction. It recognizes one thing proceeding from another, until it sees the end—and the reason why God can see the end is, he can see how men will act in all the situations of life: Man's actions depend on his will—God sees what that will will be; but to say that the foreknowledge of God lays necessity on the thing foreseen, involves some of the most dreadful and shocking consequences of which the mind can conceive.

1. Consequence. The Calvinists, to maintain their doctrine, destroy the *Omnipotence* of God: For if his *Omniscience* sees all things that ever will exist; and if this foresight lays necessity on their existence, no being can act from choice, because his actions are foreseen, and God himself cannot make a *free agent*; and if he cannot, then he has not all power, and therefore cannot be *Omnipotent*; for to make a free agent is plainly within the power of *Omnipotence*—the power to do all things.

2. Consequence. They destroy the *liberty* of the Deity himself: For if *He*, from all eternity foresaw all things that ever would exist, *He* must have seen those things which the Creator does, as well as those which the creatures do; and if foresight lays necessity on existence, then God was necessitated from all eternity to make just such a Universe as he has—*Men* and *Angels* just as they are—some good and some bad—some for Heaven, and others for Hell; and he could not act otherwise; and thus the liberty of the Deity, and all his creatures, are destroyed at one stroke. And if God must necessarily know all things, then there

is no such a thing as freedom. Foreknowledge drags the Deity and all his creatures necessarily at its wheels; and it is dragged by some other necessity, but what we know not, and we tremble to extend our thoughts! but it does appear that it cannot be in God, for *He*, himself, is the subject of his knowledge, according to the view we are now opposing, and therefore none of his other perfections can have dominion over it; and thus liberty is banished from the *Universe*, and necessity chains the Deity and all his creatures. These consequences seem to us inseparable from the premises, and we do hope that no man after seeing these undeniable consequences, will ever undertake to support a *system of doctrines* at so great an expense.

But it may be said that the foreknowledge of God is an incomprehensible subject; this we admit, and we would have been willing to let this subject rest, if our Calvinistic brethren had not brought this incomprehensible witness to prove their doctrine. This has made it necessary for us to say something, and we think we can comprehend what we have said. We will conclude with saying that the difference between us and the Calvinist is this: We believe what God foresees will take place: They believe it must take place. We believe that God's foreknowledge lays no necessity on the act of the creature: They believe it does.

We have now passed through the subject; and we think we have clearly seen, that election to eternal glory is conditional in the case of every man; and that the condition is such as secures God's glory, humbles the sinner's pride, and gives justice sufficient ground to reward and punish men.

We will close our discourse by shewing the necessity of men believing the doctrine of the Church to which they belong. By belonging to a Church we necessarily become its supporters, and consequently the promoters of its doctrine; this we do by extending its borders. And how any man can do this when he does not believe the doctrine it holds, and preserve a conscience void of offence before his Maker, is beyond our comprehension: For the *truth* stares him in the face, that if ever the world, or any part of it, be saved, it must be saved by the TRUTH. And yet he refuses to give his support to what he really believes to be the *truth* of God; and instead of supporting what he believes to be the *truth*, gives his influence, his personal exertions, and often his money with them, to support, and extend, what he does not believe. This course of conduct goes to say that there is no moral difference between *truth* and error—*Angels weep!* But to make this point more plain, we refer you to I. Cor. XIII. 1—4.

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not Charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the *gift of prophecy*, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so

that I could remove mountains, and have not Charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be buried, and have not Charity, it profiteth me nothing." Here we see plainly, that no gift or work will atone for the want of Charity or Love. And when we give the subject a more particular notice, we find that rejoicing in the truth is one of Charity's essential attributes. (See v. 6.) But how can any man rejoice in the truth who refuses to own and support it? And how can any man have Charity who does not possess its essential attributes? And how can any man be saved without Charity? JUDGE YE!

From these reflections we are driven to the conclusion, that any man who lives in a Church, the doctrine of which he does not believe, when he has it in his power to unite with one whose doctrines agree with his views of truth, cannot have Charity, as defined in the XIII. ch. of I. Cor. and therefore cannot get to Heaven—He has not moral honesty. And while truth drives us to these conclusions, O! how we tremble for many we know. When we converse with them, they tell us they believe just as we do, and yet they give their hearty support to doctrines, as much opposed to those they profess to believe as they can be, and retain the name of Christian principles, and refuse to give any support to those they really believe. This they do by joining or remaining members of Calvinistic Churches, and refusing, for fear of man, or the reproach of the Cross, to identify themselves with what they believe to be the truth of JEHOVAH. These persons can never get to Heaven so long as moral honesty, fearing not them who can kill the body; glorying in the Cross of Christ, and rejoicing in the truth, are essential requirements. Those persons have reason—great reason to tremble, lest the *Saviour* should say in the *great day*, You refused to own me, and my truth, before men, I now refuse to own you before my Father and his holy angels. Let those who are concerned weigh well this matter. We would exhort them not to confer with flesh, but to come out at once on the side of truth.

"He that hesitates between duty and inclination, is undone."

These remarks, we expect, will subject us to the frowns of such as have woven for themselves a spacious garment which they call Charity—for all—whose elasticity extends so far as to cover up in one common mass, the nominal professor, the spirit of the world, the pride of distinction, and contempt for plain experimental Christians; *especially Ministers* who preach the Gospel in simplicity; and present the whole with the imposing inscription—*Holiness to God; zeal for the truth*. But we have nothing to fear from this poor passing world; we are God's witnesses, hastening to render an account to Him who called us to the ministry of his word. Our motives are not to promote a name or sect. What are names or sects to us apart from Christ? That men may understand the *Truth*, practice it, and get to Heaven, are our only objects—Which may the Lord grant to be each of our happy lots.....AMEN.